



B'NAI B'RITH WORLD CENTER - JERUSALEM

After the father's death the family broke up, with Aviva and her mother going to live in Ramat Gan and the boys placed in an orphanage. Shortly afterwards, her mother also died suddenly of heart disease and Aviva grew up in a series of foster homes and institutions. Since leaving Zichron Yaacov in 1947, Aviva lost touch with the town and her vague memories proved an obstacle to her finding, in later life, traces of her family in Zichron. Even the location of her father's grave was lost to her. With her two brothers now deceased, felled too by heart disease, Aviva (who has undergone open-heart surgery) decided to make one more attempt to find her father's grave and visited the historic archive of Zichron Yaacov a few months ago unannounced. Through a combination of archival work and encounters with a number of Zichron veterans – some of them by chance – including the son of the gendarme who buried Salata at great personal risk because of the security situation at the time archive director Talma Bechor was able to locate the gravesite on which only two of the four Hebrew letters that make up the name "Salata" could be clearly seen and to fill in other missing parts of her personal and family history. Aviva was overjoyed and vowed to renovate and rededicate the tombstone. Unrelated to this, World Center director Schneider paid a long-overdue visit to the Zichron historic archives at the behest of BBI EVP Daniel Mariaschin to examine the B'nai B'rith files there as part of effort to research and document the full scope of B'nai B'rith activity in pre-state Israel. Bechor presented him with a box-load of long-neglected hand written protocol books and correspondence, including letters from Grand Lodges in Chicago and Constantinople going back to the founding of the B'nai B'rith Zichron Yaacov Lodge in 1911, through the 1960s when the lodge disbanded. While making a cursory, initial review of the protocols, Schneider happened upon an entry from January 4, 1947 that seemed to typify B'nai B'rith activity around the world from its earliest days and pointed it out to Bechor: "The second action [of the lodge reported] was for the benefit of the family of the policeman Salata that includes a widow, two boys and a girl that were left destitute after the father's death. We succeeded in placing the two boys in Ramat Gan in a social institution which is, according to the town's social worker, the best social institution. This cost 8 Palestine Pounds per month for both boys. This is a significant discount due to the fact that the director of the institution, Dr. Raphaelovich, is also a B'nai B'rith Brother. This did not necessitate an actual outlay of [Lodge] funds as we arranged [payment] by the town and from other sources. In the future, the affairs of the family will be handled by the town council's social committee [nearly all members of B'nai B'rith – A.S.]. The wife is now more tranquil and she is now working in the winery." Bechor was overwhelmed to be presented with another piece of Aviva Salata's personal puzzle, found by chance. She invited Schneider to participate in the August 28 unveiling where she presented a copy of the protocol to Aviva and included the good work of B'nai B'rith in the presentation she made for those gathered. Aviva and a number of David Salata's grandchildren also made moving eulogies at the ceremony, expressing satisfaction that they were able to perform this last rite of kindness to their father and grandfather and fill so many of the gaps in their family history.